

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

Official publication of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, featuring articles and reminiscences of the people and places in the Ypsilanti area



SUMMER 2023

BENJAMIN WOODRUFF and Woodruff's Grove

BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ



Benjamin Woodruff

Benjamin Woodruff is known by many as the founder of Woodruff's Grove, and hence, Ypsilanti. In spite of this, relatively little has been written about this founding father of our city, and much of what has been written isn't entirely accurate. This article will explore the man, his family, and the compatriots of the founding father of our community 200 years ago.



Freeloove Woodruff

BENJAMIN WOODRUFF SR.

Let's start with Benjamin Woodruff's father, Revolutionary War veteran Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. was born in Hanover, New Jersey on November 26, 1744, the oldest child of James and Joanna (Mason) Woodruff. Little is known of his childhood, but records of the Morristown Presbyterian Church note that on March 12, 1771, Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. married Phebe Pierson, and they had children named James (b. 1772), Charles (b. 1774), and Phineas (b. 1776). According to Adjutant General records, Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. enlisted as a drummer in Captain Kean's Company of the Eastern Battalion of the Morris County, New Jersey militia in the Revolutionary War. He later served as a Sergeant and Private variously under Captain Jonas Ward, Baily, Timothy Tuttle, Debow, Minard, and Gard under the command of Colonels Thomas, Spencer, Jacob Ford, Drake, Munson, and Frelinghuysen. He went on to serve under Jacob Card of the Western Battalion of the militia until the end of the Revolutionary War and took part in the battle near Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, on December 17, 1776 as well as other engagements.

Phebe Woodruff died on January 18, 1777. On July 8, 1778, Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. married Patience Lum who was then 27 years old, and they subsequently had children named Hannah (b. 1779), Elizabeth (b. 1781), Benjamin, Jr. (Woodruff's Grove founder, b. 1783), Obadiah (b. 1785), John (b. 1788), and Timothy (b. 1791). Patience died within a decade after the birth of her last child, and in 1804, at the age of 60, Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. moved with part of his family from Morristown, New Jersey, to Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

BENJAMIN and FREELOVE WOODRUFF

Benjamin J. Woodruff, Jr. was born to Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. and Patience (Lum) Woodruff in Hanover Township, Morris County, New Jersey, on July 31, 1783. Some accounts of Benjamin Woodruff, Jr. say that he was in the Revolutionary War, but as we have just learned, it was his father who had that distinction.

Benjamin Woodruff, Jr. learned the
*Benjamin Woodruff and Woodruff's
Grove continued on Page 4*

In This Issue...

- Benjamin Woodruff and Woodruff's Grove 1
By Robert Anschuetz
- Roccena and Mark Norris Arrived in Ypsilanti in 1828 and their Positive Influence is Evident Even Today..... 10
By Janice Anschuetz
- Of Salt Springs and the Origins of Michigan State Normal College..... 18
By Janice Anschuetz
- Leland Aftercare Sanatorium 22
By James Mann
- History of the Helen Avenue Feral Cat Colony 24
By Ted Badgerow
- Ypsilanti Patents..... 26
By Ted Badgerow

Society Briefs

- From the President's Desk..... 2
- Society Board Members 2
- Museum Board Report..... 15
- Archives Intern Report..... 28
- GLEANINGS Sponsors 30
- Membership Application 31
- Advertising Application 31

The Ypsilanti Historical Museum is a museum of local history which is presented as an 1860 home.

The Museum and Rudisill & Fletcher-White Archives are organized and operated by the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

We are all volunteers and our membership is open to everyone, including non-city residents.

www.ypsihistory.org

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From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

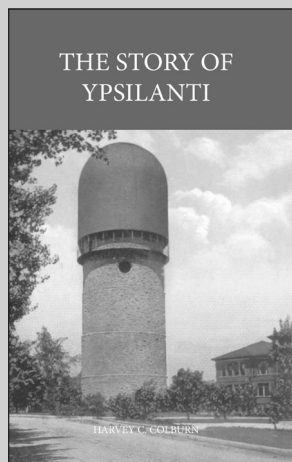
BY BILL NICKELS

The Ypsilanti Historical Society and Eastern Michigan University first partnered to staff our museum and archives with Historic Preservation Program Interns in 2006. Each party paid the stipend for one intern. The agreement was with then President John Fallon's office and has continued with each EMU President since. With the leadership of Professor Nancy Bryk, the partnership has expanded to include our museum and archives as laboratory for EMU coursework. We are pleased to announce that the partnership has been extended another two years until 2025 with current EMU President John Smith.

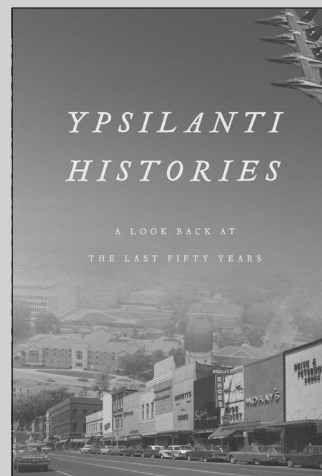
As part of Ypsilanti's centennial celebration in 1923, Harvey Colburn wrote *The Story of Ypsilanti*, Ypsilanti's first one hundred years of history. With a scarcity of original copies, the book was reprinted in 1976. In order to have copies available for our bicentennial celebration, the book has been reprinted a second time – this time with an index enabling quick answers to historical questions. It is for sale in our archives for \$20. Send us a check for the \$20 plus \$3 postage and we will mail you a copy.

When planning began for our 2023 bicentennial celebration, it was recognized that Ypsilanti changed dramatically since the sesquicentennial celebration in 1973. We were fortunate that the people who participated in most of the changes were still around. Potential authors were contacted and asked to write up to 2,000 word chapters about their view of an important part of Ypsilanti's last fifty years. The result is 268 pages and 40 chapters entitled *Ypsilanti Histories* – all about Ypsilanti's recent history! A Book Release Party will be held on Sunday July 16th at the Ypsilanti District Library where the book will first be available at \$20 per copy. The authors are all invited and will be available for autographs.

During the early spring, our Archives Intern Connor Ashley hosted 5th graders from Ann Arbor's Mitchell Elementary School. Connor arranged the archives like a classroom. He copied some of our significant archival documents which were shared with groups of students. Connor and volunteer Russ Kenyon, a retired teacher, discussed the documents with the groups. Group reports to the rest of the class followed. It was unusual to



Reprinted Harvey Colburn book *The Story of Ypsilanti* available from the YHS Archives for \$20 plus \$3 shipping.



A Book Release Party will be held on Sunday July 16th at the Ypsilanti District Library. The book will be available for purchase for \$20 per copy.



5th graders from Ann Arbor's Mitchell Elementary School visited our Archives.

have a class request a visit to our archives; most ask for a museum visit.

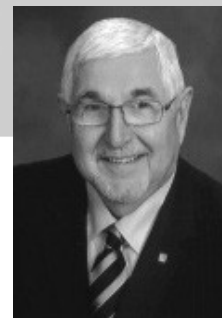
Ypsilanti's annual 4th of July parade will be a major Ypsilanti bicentennial event. The Ypsilanti Historical Society parade entry will have a Nineteenth Century Durant-Dort carriage, followed by a Twentieth Century Thunderbird, and hopefully concluded with a Twenty First Century electric car. The YHS parade theme is "The Ypsilanti Historical Society saves and shares Ypsilanti's history from parts of three centuries." Approximately thirty minutes after the parade concludes in Depot Town, parade watchers will gather at the foot of Demetrius Ypsilanti in front of the Water Tower to open the 1973 sesquicentennial's Time Capsule. The opening will be hosted by Mayor

Nicole Brown. After the parade watchers get their chance to view the Time Capsule's items, the items will be displayed in the Historical Museum for viewing during the rest of our Bicentennial Year.

The major bicentennial event will be held on Saturday August 19th in Riverside Park. Sunday August 20th will follow with the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation's Annual Historic Home Tour. The event finally resumes after being cancelled during the COVID years. This year's home tour will appropriately feature historic homes up and down North Huron Street. Some will be open on the home tour for the very first time. Attendees will gain an appreciation of Ypsilanti's rich history.

Have a safe, fun bicentennial summer!

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Woodruff's Grove Stone Marker Placed in 1923 for Ypsilanti's Centennial Celebration.

trade of saddle and harness making and dedicated himself to attaining a good education. In 1804, at the age of 20, he moved to Seneca County, New York, with his widowed father and other siblings. There, Benjamin Woodruff was a school teacher and part time country lawyer who dealt with petty cases. The term sometimes used for this was a "pettifogger."

Benjamin married Frances (Freelove) Sanford of Massachusetts on September 7, 1807. The Woodruffs had nine children, seven of which grew to adulthood. Their children were named Benjamin (b. 1808), William (b. 1810, d. 1815), Henry (b. 1813), Charles (b. 1816), Peter (b. 1818), Francis (b. 1821), all of whom were born in Seneca County, New York. Another daughter who died as a baby, Amanda (b. 1824, d. 1825), was born in Woodruff's Grove in Washtenaw County, Michigan.

Woodruff and his family left New York and moved to Ohio to make a better life. They landed near Sandusky and settled on farmland owned by Oronte Grant. Grant owned several acres of farmland, which he paid for, improved, and farmed. At least he thought he owned the farmland. Unfortunately, there was a problem with the title of ownership, and Grant was given three years to leave the land that he thought was rightfully his. Grant decided to pursue a new life in Michigan, where land was cheap and titles wouldn't be an issue. Benjamin Woodruff, who was directly impacted by the title dispute of Grant's farm, decided that he would join Grant and trek north to Michigan in pursuit of property that he

could call his own. Woodruff's wife, Freelove, had inherited hundreds of dollars from her grandfather's estate, and this money could be invested in their own farmland.

EARLY SETTLERS IN YPSILANTI

The area now known as Ypsilanti was first settled by Native Americans centuries before the first European Settlers, and there is historical evidence of trails, burial grounds, and villages in the area. French traders Gabriel Godfrey (alternatively spelled Godfroy), Francis Pepin, and Romaine de Chambre traveled through the area, trading furs, food, supplies, and other goods. Godfrey's trading post was established on the west bank of the Huron River near the Potawatomi trail that became the Chicago Road, just north of what is now known as Michigan Avenue.

On June 11, 1811, the French Claims to this land were officially deeded to the three French explorers, and a fourth parcel was provided to Godfrey's children. The French Traders resided parts of the year at the trading post, but also spent a lot of time out of the area. They didn't raise families at the site, and probably didn't even live there permanently, so Godfrey's Trading Post isn't officially considered the birth of the city of Ypsilanti. The French settlement was mostly abandoned by 1820.

In 1818 and 1819, the United States surveyed more of the land around the present-day Ypsilanti and made that land available for purchase. The first buyer was Eli Kellogg, who bought 132 acres on July 1, 1822. Augustus Woodward

purchased 80 acres on August 16, 1822. Neither Kellogg nor Woodward moved to the area, they just owned the land.

There was a man named Eldridge Gee who much later claimed that he led the first settlement to the area in June 1822. The early pioneers of Ypsilanti said that they couldn't recall any interaction with a man named Gee, and stated that it would have been impossible to have lived in the same vicinity without any interaction. So, the history books don't credit Eldridge Gee as the founder of Ypsilanti.

WOODRUFF MOVES TO MICHIGAN

The story of the 1823 settlement of Woodruff's Grove began in April 1823, and is best articulated in the words of Elona (Rogers) Cross, who was living with Oronte Grant's family near Sandusky after she had become orphaned. Elona, herself, would come to the Woodruff's Grove settlement in 1824. This testimony was published in the Winter 2022 issue of the Gleanings in an article written by Janice Anschuetz. The story sets the stage with the following:

A wagon was loaded with provisions and driving Mr. Grant's large stock of cattle they started for Monroe. The company consisted of four men, Messrs. Woodruff and Grant, William Eiclor – Mrs. Woodruff's brother – and Hiram Tuttle, a neighbor who also had cattle to drive.

At Monroe they sold the cattle, reserving only such as would be needed on the farms which they intended to purchase. Here also they were joined by four men, Mr. Stiles, Mr. Willard Hall, Mr. George Hall, and Captain Fair, who were fishing at Monroe. These men were former acquaintances of Woodruff and Grant, and were familiar with the new country along the course of the Huron river (sic), having been up as far as a place called Godfrey's trading post, now City of Ypsilanti.

From their representations it was thought best to view that part of the Territory, and thither the company proceeded, leaving Mr. Eiclor in charge of the cattle and provisions. After selecting and locating their farms it was necessary to return to Monroe for the oxen, provisions, etc., leaving Mr. Stiles and his party to subsist by hunting and fishing until their return, they being the only white inhabitants of the region.

On the first of June, 1823, they were ready to commence the building of Woodruff's house. The unbroken forest lay before them, and with the sound of their axes began the new settlement, afterward called Woodruff's Grove.

When the work was well commenced, Woodruff and Grant went back to Ohio, leaving the building to be finished by the others of the party, under the supervision of Mr. Tuttle. Mr. Woodruff intended to return with his family – which consisted of wife, six children and a hired woman, Mrs. Snow – before the fourth of the next month, that they might celebrate the great national holiday in their new home. They failed to

accomplish this, not arriving until the sixth, and the festivities were postponed until the following year.

FOUNDING FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF WOODRUFF'S GROVE

Woodruff had enough cash on hand that he was able to purchase an initial 114 acres of property immediately upon arrival, while the other settlers took some additional time to purchase their land. With the arrival of Woodruff's family in July 1823, the pioneer settlement was carved out of a grove of thickly forested oak trees. These early pioneers were the founding fathers and mothers of Woodruff's Grove, precisely 200 years ago this year. The family of Benjamin Woodruff, along with Oronte Grant, William Eiclor, Hiram Tuttle, David Stiles, Willard Hall, George Hall, and Captain Fair were the first white settlers in the spring of 1823. They were joined in the summer by fellow pioneers John Thayer, Robert Stitts, David Beverly, and Titus Bronson. By the fall, several families were added to the settlement, including Daniel Cross, John Bryan, Mr. Noyce, and Mr. Brainard. The family of Joseph and Sophia Peck also arrived in 1823, but their settlement was a little further away on the present-day Forest Ave. between Prospect St. and River St. in an area known as Peckville.

By the fall of 1823, there were eight small log cabins in the Woodruff's Grove settlement on the east side of the river. The homes of Bryan, Cross, and Woodruff had rough floors and stick chimneys. George Hall, Willard Hall, and David Beverly built their cabins on the west side of the river.

NAMING OF WOODRUFF'S GROVE

At the time that Woodruff's Grove was established, the region was still a wilderness with scores of wild animals, such as bears, wolves, foxes, and deer. Native Americans still resided in the area, and many others passed through the area on occasion. The land was prairie and forest, and the Huron River was depended on for fresh water and fish. It was a tough life and magnifies the difficulty in establishing settlements in the wilderness in those days. Pioneer settlers were committed to help each other and live under a set of rules that all were required to abide by.

In the year 1823, Woodruff's Grove settlers depended on frequent trips to Detroit to get provisions, and it took almost a week to complete the round-trip. Detroit was the nearest post-office to the settlement, and, wishing a more definite address for letters, Benjamin Woodruff journeyed to the city and laid the matter before Michigan Territorial Governor Lewis Cass. The result was that the new settlement received the name of Woodruff's Grove.

Benjamin Woodruff became the leader of the settlement. He was customarily called Major Woodruff, possibly for his role in a militia, or possibly out of respect for his leadership in the village. He was the first justice of the peace and the first sheriff appointed by Territorial Governor Cass. Cass ap-

pointed other officers to the settlement, and ultimately approved a bill attaching Woodruff's Grove to Wayne County for judicial purposes due to its proximity to an established court system there. Woodruff himself was appointed by the Governor as postmaster, and it was his custom to carry the mail he picked up from Detroit with him in his hat, and he collected 25 cents for each mail delivery. Benjamin Woodruff also opened the first cabin in Washtenaw County that provided overnight lodging.

LOCATION OF WOODRUFF'S GROVE

According to "The History of Washtenaw County," published by Chapman in 1881, the 114 acres of property acquired by Benjamin J. Woodruff in April of 1823 included the following sections of Ypsilanti Township in Washtenaw County:

Section 15: west half of the northwest quarter and fraction

Section 16: northeast fraction and east fraction

Section 22: fractional part

The primary portion of Woodruff's property is the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 15 of what is now Ypsilanti Township. There are 640 acres in each section, so this would be 80 acres. Woodruff's property was 114 acres in total, including 20-30 acres of Section 16 that was on the east side of the river adjacent to his 80 acres in Section 15. The west side of the river in Section 16 was part of diagonal strips of land known the French Claims. The small bit of property that Woodruff owned in Section 22 was further south and was probably the location of the grist mill that Woodruff established about ½ mile south of his main property. The 1923 book titled *The Story of Ypsilanti*, by Harvey Colburn, states that Woodruff's cabin was on the land owned by Addison Fletcher. The stone marker for Woodruff's Grove at the intersection of Grove St. and Prospect St. matches the Colburn description of the location of Woodruff's cabin being where the "Foerster house is near the old brewery". Benjamin Woodruff later acquired 160 additional acres in the southwest corner of Section 15.

The location of other properties in Woodruff's Grove is documented in *The History of Ypsilanti* as follows:

"Other members of the party meanwhile had been selecting land which they eventually entered. Oronte Grant southwest of Woodruff's on Section Fifteen. Hiram Tuttle still to the southeast on Section Twenty-Two. David Stiles, west of the river on part of the northwest quarter of Section Twenty-One. Willard Hall, west of the river near the southeast corner of Section 16.

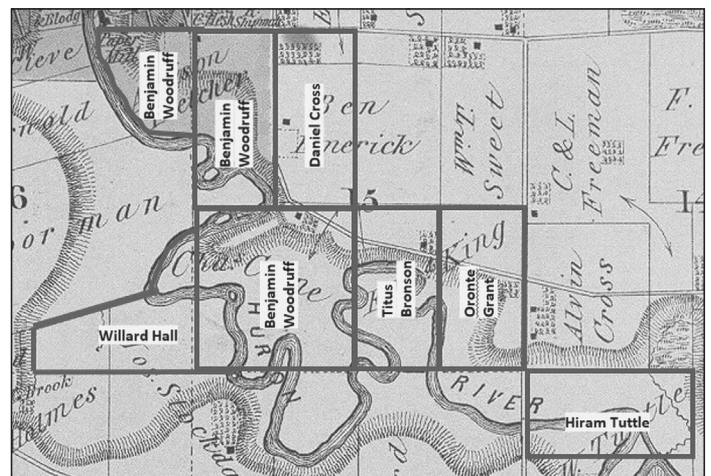
Other adventurers into the wilderness, drawn by tidings of the new settlement, began to appear and were made welcome by the first-comers. Soon came Daniel Cross to become Woodruff's neighbor less than a mile to the east. David Beverly, S. Noyce, Robert M. Stitts, John Thayer, and J.



Location of Woodruff's Grove Pioneer Property circa 1825.

Brainard were soon settled in nearby cabins. Sanders Beverly built near Willard Hall's on the bank of the stream. Titus Bronson located on the south side of Section 15."

In the year 2000, an article titled "Orange Risdon Map of 1825" in the *Ann Arbor Observer* discusses the earliest known map of Washtenaw County. This 1825 map was drawn immediately after Washtenaw County was surveyed by the Government, and shows the eight original log cabins of Woodruff's Grove located on Benjamin Woodruff's property. The cabins were high on the bank above the river on Benjamin Woodruff's property, approximately where the



1825 Orange Risdon Map showing both Ypsilanti and Woodruff's Grove.

Woodruff's Grove historical marker is now located. The map also shows only three cabins in Ypsilanti. There were certainly additional homes in the area by 1825, including cabins owned by Peck, Cross, Hall, Stiles, Norris, Hewitt, etc., but the map clearly shows the center of the settlements of Woodruff's Grove and Ypsilanti.

On today's maps, Benjamin Woodruff's 114 acres extended south from the location of the Woodruff's Grove historical marker, and much of Woodruff's property now is under Ford Lake and most of the area purchased by other settlers that comprised the Woodruff's Grove settlement is now in Ypsilanti Township. Only a small portion of the original Woodruff's Grove settlement is actually within the 2023 boundaries of the City of Ypsilanti, and even that portion was a much later addition to the city, annexed in the first half of the 20th century.

RISE OF WOODRUFF'S GROVE

By 1824, Woodruff's Grove had grown in population that is estimated to be between 14 and 29 people. On February 27, 1824, Alpha Washtenaw Bryan became the first white child born in Washtenaw County. This fact might be in dispute, though, since Captain Stitts claimed later that his daughter was born 6 months prior to Alpha Washtenaw Bryan, whereas other accounts say that the Stitts child was born the same day as Alpha Washtenaw Bryan, only a few hours later. On July 4, 1824, the entire settlement gathered to celebrate the nation's birthday on roughly the first anniversary of the settlement of Woodruff's Grove. The village gathered around a bored out, iron-bound oak log, and they were joined by a guest, the Indian Chief Blue Jacket. The first death in the settlement was Walter Oakman, a young Irishman, in 1824. In August of 1824, a fever outbreak hit the settlement and took the life of at least one of the pioneers. Mrs. Woodruff nursed many in the community back to health.

The first religious sermon in Woodruff's Grove was preached by John Baughman. In 1825, the settlement was growing, and Woodruff built the first grist mill about a half mile south of Woodruff's Grove. It was built of hewn logs; the building was some 20 x 30 feet square, and he commenced running the mill in the fall of 1825. Also in 1825, John Bryan was appointed postmaster of Woodruff's Grove, replacing Benjamin Woodruff. In September 1825, David and Jonathan Ely established a store at Woodruff's Grove. In November 1825, the first marriage in the area was to Eliza Cross and Andrew McKinstry.

In the Spring of 1826, a meeting was held at Woodruff's Grove to establish a militia organization. Its purpose was to protect the scattered settlers from roving bands of Native Americans. It may have been through this militia that Benjamin Woodruff obtained his title of Major Woodruff.

In 1827, a Mr. Fleming arrived with his family to the village

of Woodruff's Grove. His son, Charles Fleming, later recalled the details of his family's settlement in the Grove, which by then was 4 years old.

In 1827 my father arrived in Detroit on his way west of Detroit to make a home. After storing part of our goods father found a team to take the balance and the family to Woodruff's Grove. There we were met by Archie McNath with an ox team and taken to Aunt Polly McNath's home, on the bank of the Willow Run, about four miles east of Ypsilanti; and that night the wolves made the most hideous noise I ever heard by their howling. It seemed as though the woods were full of them. The next morning we were up early, and I saw such a sight as I had never seen before. The air was fairly alive with pigeons as far as we could see in every direction, all flying to the north and many of them flying so low that the boys with long whips could bring them to the ground.

Charles Fleming described the very difficult situation facing the early pioneers of the Grove as follows:

At first all our groceries and provisions excepting wild game and fish had to be bought in Detroit: and there were times when we could scarcely get anything to eat. I remember seeing my mother taking ashes from the fire, making a strong lye and scalding corn in it to take the hulls off and boiling it soft, so we could eat it with milk. Often we had to live on corn meal and potatoes. We were not alone in this condition.

There was a great deal of sickness, many times not a well one in the family to take care of the sick, and only one doctor that we knew of. The sickness was mostly fevers and ague. There were a good many deaths, but not such a conveyance as a hearse was known. I remember one of our neighbors was sick and thought he was going to die, sent for my father and asking him if he would take his horse and carry his body to the grave, as he did not want to be drawn there by oxen.

It is utterly impossible for me to describe the trials, privations, anxieties, toils and suffering of the pioneers; but amid all this there was one thing that was really comforting: The citizens were all neighbors and friends: no one dared to be otherwise, for everyone was dependent on his neighbor, and when a stranger came he was sure of a hearty welcome.

FALL OF WOODRUFF'S GROVE

In 1824, Father Gabriel Richard, Representative in Congress for the Michigan Territory, urged the building of a federal highway from Detroit to Chicago, to be known as the Chicago Road. The surveying crew, following the Sauk Indian Trail, put the crossing of the Huron River nearly a mile north of Woodruff's Grove. On June 1, 1825, the ending chapter was being written to Woodruff's Grove just as it was begin-

ning, as the Chicago Road would bypass Woodruff's Grove. Much of the original settlement slowly disbanded to live nearer to the Ypsilanti city-center.

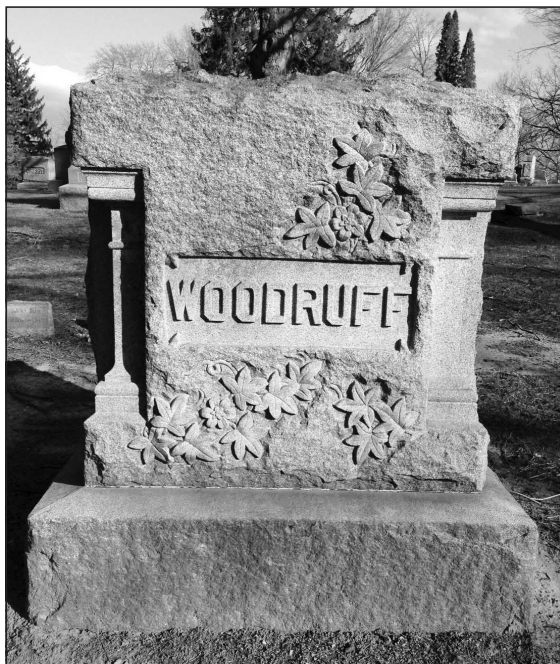
The City of Ypsilanti was founded in 1825 by the primary owners of the four French Claims, John Stewart, Augustus Woodward, and William Harwood. Each had a different name selected for the city, but we all know that Augustus Woodward's choice of Ypsilanti, named after the admired Greek General Demetrios Ypsilantis, picked the name that stuck. Ypsilanti Township was officially established in 1827, with Abel Millington being voted as its first Supervisor.

By 1828, the Woodruff's Grove post office had closed, and the area that was formerly Woodruff's Grove became part of Ypsilanti Township, outside the city limits of Ypsilanti. It wasn't until many years later that some of the land that Benjamin Woodruff purchased became annexed into the city of Ypsilanti, and much of the extent of what formerly was called Woodruff's Grove is still either under Ford Lake or part of Ypsilanti Township.

Many original settlers were buried in Woodruff's Grove in unmarked graves. Only the early settlers recalled where the bodies were buried. The first man to die in Woodruff's Grove, Walter Oakman, had his body moved from the original Woodruff's Grove burial site to the Highland Cemetery. The supposed second man to die in Woodruff's Grove, Col. McNath, died in 1826 and was buried in a field near a lone apple tree a short distance from the Woodruff's Grove marker. In the early 1900's, workmen were digging at the Clark & Turney gravel pit near the Woodruff's Grove area, they dug up several skeletons that they presumed were from early settlers of the Grove.

WHEN IS YPSILANTI'S ANNIVERSARY?

The Ann Arbor Observer article about the Orange Risdon map mentions the confusion about when Ypsilanti was actually founded. Was it 1823 with the establishment of Woodruff's Grove, or was it 1825 with the establishment of Ypsilanti? Ann Arbor was founded in 1824, so some Ann Arbor historians proclaim that Ann Arbor precedes Ypsilanti, whereas most historians conclude that Ypsilanti precedes Ann Arbor. From the article: "Only five settlements are shown in Washtenaw County (author's note: in the 1825 Orange Risdon Map): besides Ann Arbor, Dixborough, and Dexter there are Ypsilanti and Woodruff's Grove. Showing



Woodruff Family Plot at Highland Cemetery.

the last two as separate places adds fuel to a continuing debate between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti over which was settled first. It is clear that Ann Arbor was founded in 1824 and Ypsilanti in 1825—but Woodruff's Grove was founded in 1823, and it was later absorbed by Ypsilanti."

Even the official celebrations of Ypsilanti's founding are inconsistent. On July 4, 1874, the city of Ypsilanti celebrated their Semi-Centennial reflecting on the first community gathering, ignoring Woodruff's Grove's actual Semi-Centennial celebration of 1873. However, the Ypsilanti's Centennial was celebrated in 1923, the Sesquicentennial was celebrated in 1973, and the Bicentennial is being celebrated in 2023.

In the early days of settlements, Woodruff's Grove and Ypsilanti formed as separate entities. In 1825, a political convention was held to nominate officers of Washtenaw County. The delegates from Woodruff's Grove were Benjamin Woodruff and Thomas Sackridge. The village of Ypsilanti was represented by Dr. Rufus Pomeroy. It was at this convention that Woodruff was nominated for the office of sheriff of Washtenaw County. The fact of the matter is that for at least three years from 1825-1828, Ypsilanti and Woodruff's Grove existed as neighboring villages, but they have long ago been reconciled as a single city in most viewpoints. So, 1823 marks the official founding date as far as Ypsilanti residents are concerned.

BENJAMIN WOODRUFF'S LIFE AFTER THE GROVE

Benjamin Woodruff and his wife moved from the old Woodruff's Grove settlement to the town of Ypsilanti on Congress St. (now Michigan Ave.). They later purchased 80 acres of land in Pittsfield Township where they raised their family and farmed the land. The property was at "Carpenter's Corners", located at the Northwest corner of Packard St. and Carpenter Rd. where the White Castle restaurant is located today.

In 1936, at the age of 92, Revolutionary War veteran Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. traveled in the back of a wagon to Pittsfield Township to live with his son Benjamin, Jr. Benjamin Woodruff, Sr. is one of seven documented Revolutionary War soldiers who later came to settle and be buried in Washtenaw County. Woodruff, Sr. died on October 8, 1837, shortly before his 93rd birthday and was buried in a private grave. His body was later moved to Forest Hill Cemetery

after it opened in 1857. The inscription on the Woodruff family gravestone indicates his status as a Revolutionary War veteran. The daughters of the American Revolution marked his grave in 1906. The records of Forest Hill Cemetery list Benjamin, Sr. as being buried there, but it does not list Benjamin Jr., even though his name also appears on the family gravestone.

Benjamin Woodruff, Jr. died February 16, 1874, in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the age of 90 years 6 months and 16 days. According to the "History of Washtenaw County", Benjamin Woodruff Jr. was buried in an unmarked grave, likely on his property in Pittsfield township. Woodruff lived to witness the 50th anniversary of his arrival at Woodruff's Grove, but, sadly, his life fell just five months short of being able to celebrate the Semi-Centennial celebration on July 4, 1874, on Independence Island on the Huron River in Ypsilanti. Independence Island had once belonged to Benjamin Woodruff and was part of his 114 acres of land, and is now beneath Ford Lake. Benjamin's wife, Freelove, died November 20, 1867, at the age of 84.

CHARLES WOODRUFF

Benjamin and Freelove Woodruff raised several successful children, but only one remained prominent in Ypsilanti, and that was their son, Charles Woodruff. Charles was a member of the Ypsilanti Board of Education, a city Alderman, and was the owner of one of Ypsilanti's newspapers, the Ypsilanti Sentinel. His legacy lives on in Ypsilanti with the naming of Woodruff School after him. Charles Woodruff's obituary reads as follows:

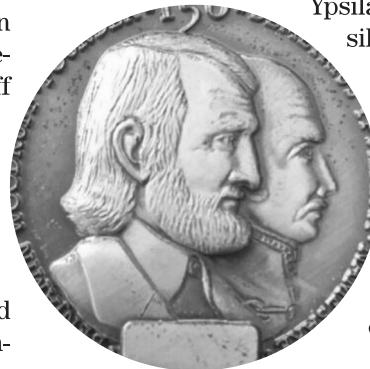
"Charles Woodruff, the veteran editor of the Ypsilanti Sentinel, who wielded for many years the most vigorous and trenchant pen of any editorial writer in Michigan, died at his home in Ypsilanti, Wednesday, after a long illness. In fact it has been generally known that he has been failing for the past two or three years. He was a strong man, of many idiosyncrasies, who had a contempt for popularity or money, who said what he thought was right regardless of whom it hit or who it affected himself. He always stood up for the underdog in a fight and was master of most vigorous English. He several times refused lucrative positions because he would not submit to have his writings pruned, or to sink his individuality in



Charles Woodruff – Son of Benjamin and Freelove Woodruff.

his individuality in

the policy of the paper, seeking the aid of his able pen. He was born in Seneca county, N. Y., February 7, 1816, learned a tailor's trade and came to Michigan with his parents in 1836(sic), settling at Carpenter's Corners, Pittsfield. The same year he began working at his trade in Ypsilanti, earning enough to complete his education at Allegheny College in 1842. Returning to Ypsilanti, in 1844 he purchased the Ypsilanti Sentinel which had been established the previous year, and which he continuously conducted up to the time that his failing health obliged him to give over the paper to his son, M. T. Woodruff. He gave a great deal of his time and energy to advancing the cause of education and was largely influential in establishing the present school system in Michigan. For several years during his early residence in



Benjamin Woodruff and Demetrius Ypsilanti depicted on sesquicentennial coin.

Ypsilanti, he ran an academy at Ypsilanti. For a number of years he was a member of the Ypsilanti board of education. For many years also he was an alderman of the first ward of Ypsilanti. He was a candidate for lieutenant governor on the O'Connor ticket of 1872, and several times was the democratic candidate for mayor of Ypsilanti. He represented the Detroit Free Press at Lansing during the legislative sessions of 1855 and 1857. Mr. Woodruff

was a fine German, Latin, French and Greek scholar, and during his last illness quite frequently sang German songs. He was an orthodox broad-minded Christian gentle man and devotedly attached to the memory of his mother. On October 29, 1850, he was united in marriage with Mary M. Jones, one of the earliest settlers of Ann Arbor. They settled in the home which they continued to occupy until removed by death. Besides his widow, four sons survive; the oldest, Charles M., and youngest, Caius L., reside in Detroit; the second son, Marcus T., is the present proprietor of the Sentinel, and the third son, Atticus, resides in Ypsilanti.

CONCLUSION

Benjamin Woodruff took a chance on a new and better life by moving his family from near Sandusky, Ohio, to a wilderness settlement in Michigan in 1823 – 200 years ago. Along with him came other pioneer settlers who established residences in Woodruff's Grove and Ypsilanti. The communities combined and the area grew into the city that we know and love today. And since Woodruff's Grove was founded in 1823 and Ypsilanti was founded in 1825, we have a chance to celebrate another bicentennial in two short years.

(Robert Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti in the historic Swaine house at the corner of Forest Ave. and River St. He is a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



The Norris home that was built on River Street near the Huron River, circa 1833.

ROCCENA and MARK NORRIS

Arrived in Ypsilanti in 1828 and their Positive Influence is Evident Even Today

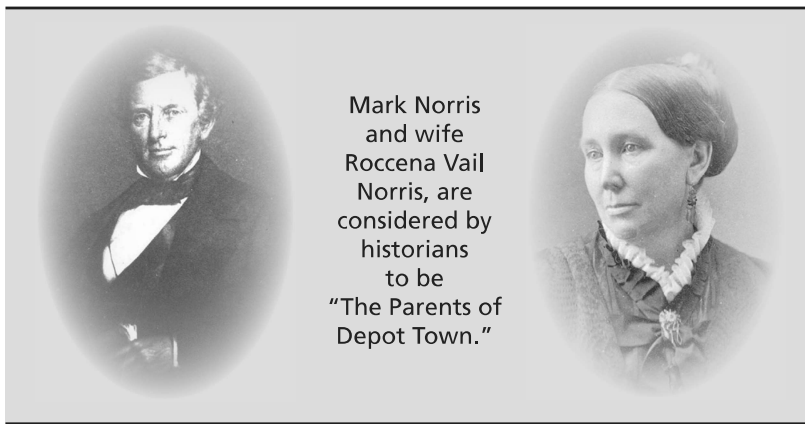
BY JANICE ANSCHEUTZ

As we celebrate the birth of Ypsilanti 200 years ago, perhaps it is time to remember two people who have shaped our community more than any others in our history - Mark and Roccena Vail Norris. In 1828, with their two small children, they made the difficult journey from New York to the wilderness which we now call Ypsilanti, which then consisted of a few crude and hastily built log cabins. From a bluff in what is now Highland Cemetery, Roccena viewed the smoke rising from scattered log cabins in what was to be her new community, then put her weary head down on a stump and cried as the prospect sank in of what she would soon call home. Although this article was originally published in the Gleanings in the Spring, 2014 issue, it needs to be retold as we ponder the beginnings of our city and wonder how Ypsilanti came to be. It tells the story of a hardworking and brave couple whose influence can be felt today.

After reading my original article, two of the g-g-g-grandchild-

dren of Mark and Roccena Norris contacted me and planned a visit to Ypsilanti to see for themselves the legacy of their ancestors. In early June, 2018, Ypsilanti welcomed Suzanne Benton from Washington State and Roxane Canfield from California. I prepared a "Norris tour" for them and we started by visiting family graves at Highland Cemetery, and then drove to the Norris family home on River Street. We then had lunch courtesy of Linda French, owner of the Side Track Restaurant, which is located in a structure that their g-g-g-grandfather built. The next stop was the Ypsilanti Historical Society museum where they viewed the oil paintings of their ancestors hanging prominently in the parlor, were presented with a proclamation from the Ypsilanti mayor, enjoyed a reception and viewed various documents, pictures and letters about their family in the archives.

Suzanne and Roxane spent the night in a historic B & B on Huron Street and the next morning attended a service in a church which Mark and Roccena Norris helped found.



Mark Norris
and wife
Roccena Vail
Norris, are
considered by
historians
to be
"The Parents of
Depot Town."

Following this, the First Presbyterian Church held a parish picnic where they met many current residents. Ypsilanti opened its arms and hearts to these interesting women. I wrote about their visit in an article published in the Fall, 2018 edition of the Gleanings which you might want to read. It can be found on the Ypsilanti Historical Society web site – ypsihistory.org. I hope that you enjoy "meeting" Roccena and Mark Norris, whose courage, determination, planning, love and skill went into shaping the wilderness into the current city of Ypsilanti.

Mark Norris is considered by many Ypsilanti historians as the father of Depot Town. If that is so, then his wife Roccena is the mother, and together they are the parents. In this article I hope to tell the story of how they combined to do so much to influence the enterprise, activity and fabric of not only Depot Town but also of River Street. Together, in their separate ways, they helped to build a sturdy foundation for a successful town in which businesses could thrive and families could prosper. Many of his contemporaries would agree that Mark Norris was an enterprising, energetic man who probably founded more businesses and did more to improve the daily life of Ypsilantians than any other man in Washtenaw County in the mid-1800s. Roccena, his wife, spent tireless hours helping to shape the moral character of the community by encouraging religion, education, literacy, and helping the poor of the community.

Mark Norris was one of 14 children

born in a town which later became known as Peacham, Vermont, on February 16, 1796. He was educated there and once taught at Lima Seminary. Mark learned the trade of land surveyor and left home to move to Covington, New York, sometime before 1819, where he opened a business running a country store. He also built and ran an ashery where potash and pearlash were made. He was appointed postmaster in 1824.

There, Mark's life changed forever when he fell in love with the spirited Roccena Vail. She had been born in Delaware County, New York, in 1798, the oldest daughter of James and Helena Compton Vail. Education was valued in their household and Roccena was taught to read at an early age by her favorite uncle. She grew up surrounded by the books that she loved, as her father founded the town library. Her teacher also lived with the Vail family. According to Roccena's granddaughter, Maria Norris, the Vail family lived on the banks of the Delaware River and the young girl rowed a canoe across the river to school.

Roccena's father's sudden death, when she was only 15 years of age, quickly changed the life of her family. Roccena and her aunt traveled together to the wilderness of Pike, New York, to find land that her widowed mother could afford. Indians still lived in this area and the curious young girl would visit with them in their nearby wigwams. Roccena's family soon joined her and her aunt, and a log cabin was built for them to live in. Roccena found a job as

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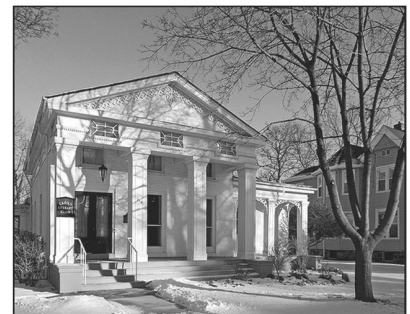


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a teacher. Her small salary provided much of the support of her family. Food was scarce and Rocenna's heart went out to the starving Indians and poor people in the community. Because she was sometimes paid in peas and new potatoes, her family had enough food and they shared what provisions they had with the less fortunate.

Mark and Rocenna met at a church in Covington, New York, which was the town she taught in seven miles from her own family home in Moscow, New York. They married in her mother's log cabin during a fierce two-day snow storm in January, 1820, and moved to their own log cabin. Mark and Rocenna invited her mother and the rest of her family to join them three months later, adding two rooms onto their house to accommodate them. Mark's businesses did well and they were soon able to move from their log cabin to a substantial frame home, which their granddaughter Maria described as a "modest mansion." The family had grown by them and Mark and Rocenna were blessed with two children, Elvira and Lyman Decatur.

Mark Norris was a Mason and at that time there was a great deal of anti-Mason sentiment in New York, which seems to be the family's primary reason for seeking a more tolerant and free environment in a new territory. He first traveled to what is now Ypsilanti, Michigan, in 1827, and we can read about his journey in pages from his diary:

July 9, 1827 – Left Buffalo on steamer Marie Antoinette, Captain Whittaker, for Detroit, which was reached July 16, only a seven days' passage.

July 18 – After waiting a day for the stage, I started on foot for the interior. Walked as far as Springwells, when I took a due west course of about six miles. Crossed the Rouge, a sluggish, dark muddy stream, with plenty of rich land on either side, and rich in fever and ague too, I should judge. Traveled about 24 miles. Stopped all night at Andrew's Tavern on Togus Plains.

Ypsilanti, Friday, 28 – Have spent most of the day in viewing the village. Nature and art have combined to make it a place of business. It is situated on the Huron, nine miles below Ann Arbor, and four miles above the landing, where boats of twenty-tons burden arrive from the lake to unload. Land is already valued very high.

Saturday 29 – To-day bought two village lots (half



Mark Norris died in 1862, at the age of 66, in his beautiful home on River Street.

an acre) for which I paid \$100 and returned again to Ann Arbor.

Sunday, 30 – Spent most of this forenoon in searching for a man lost in the woods, and supposed to be dead. Made no discovery. There is no church and no preaching here to-day. It seems to be a place for lounging and gossip. In the afternoon attended a wedding and saw Mr. Higby united in "hymen's gentle bonds" to Miss Ann Gorham.

Monday, July 31 – Went with Dr. W. to Saline. Fine good land but somewhat broken and I believe sickly. Returned by way of Ypsilanti, a fine country of land between the Saline and Huron.

Tuesday, Ypsilanti – This day I have been viewing the lands in the vicinity of this village. Concluded to purchase within a short distance of the village. The lands on the Chicago Road, now being built from Detroit west, and mostly taken up by speculators, and also on the river.

Aug. 5 – Staid in this village last night. This morning took a deed for the farm purchase yesterday and returned to Ann Arbor.

Aug. 6 – Left Washtenaw for Detroit. Traveled to the Rouge within six miles of Detroit. Retired to bed very much fatigued, but the mosquitoes would not let me sleep. They attacked on larboard and starboard, and raked me from "stem to stern." I fought them until my patience, if not my ammunition, was exhausted, when I arose and prepared for flight. Started about 12 o'clock for Detroit. The first three miles met with no incident worth mentioning, after which I was assailed by an army of dogs at every house. Arriving at Detroit I went to the inn, where after receiving a long lecture from the landlord for being out at that time of night, I was permitted to go to bed again, and slept until a late hour the following morning. Men, who are not pioneers are allowed in hotels now minus a landlord's lecture.

Surprisingly, after all he had endured on his first venture to what is now Ypsilanti, Mark returned to Covington, disposed of his business, store, and home and began the return journey with his two young children and wife the next year, 1828. In 1874, son Lyman spoke at Ypsilanti's Semi-Centennial and told about his family's trip to Michigan. It was not an easy one either physically or emotionally for the small family. In *The Story of Ypsilanti*, written by Harvey C. Colburn, published in 1923, Colburn summarizes Lyman's speech.

In their company was a Mrs. Curtis who was on her way to visit a son in Superior Township. The Norrises arrived from Detroit by way of Plymouth and Dixboro. In the city they had secured a horse and a two-wheeled gig. Anson Brown

with a one-horse wagon travelled with them, taking the children with him in the wagon while the ladies rode in the gig and Norris walked. The road was all but bottomless and it was after thirty-eight hours that they arrived in Dixboro, having stopped one night at a wayside tavern. In Dixboro they remained over night with a family by the name of Martin, then having parted from Brown, followed the road to Ypsilanti, the children riding in the gig.

As they reached the bluff where now is Highland Cemetery, Norris cried "There's Ypsilanti." Half a mile distant, they saw a wreath of smoky vapor rising from the bushes and caught a glimpse of the unfinished frame structure which was to be Perry's Tavern. Mrs. Norris leaned her head against a stump, wearied and lonesome, and burst into tears. Then, Norris being urged to go forward and procure some manner of lodgings, the mother and two little ones slowly followed. Arriving at the bank of the Huron, they found a narrow foot-bridge, newly erected, spanning a clear, swift stream. The opposite bank up which the road climbed was very steep and at its summit stood the tavern then kept by Judge Oliver Whitmore.

It seems that the young family soon set about to become positive members of the sparsely settled town. Their first year was spent at the rear of the Ely home, which was situated on the southeast corner of the Chicago Road (now Michigan Avenue) and Washington Street. Their granddaughter Maria Norris described the modest living quarters as consisting of two rooms and a pantry on the ground floor, a store operated by Mr. Arden Ballard in front, and two rooms above. This did not stop Roccena from using one of the rooms as a school for the pioneer children in the vicinity. There was no church at the time, so she assisted in organizing the first Sunday School in a log building on the Chicago Road for people of any denomination. Circuit riders were always welcome guests at her home, which later housed many

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visiting ministers.

By the next year, 1829, Norris built the first frame home on the east side of the river. Some believe that it was in the area of 501 North River Street. The same year, he opened a dry goods store made of logs with huge cracks in the rough wood floor. This was situated east of the Chicago Road bridge, on the south side of the street. It was not an easy matter to equip his store. He purchased goods from New York which were then shipped to Buffalo on the Hudson River, then through the Erie Canal, where they were transferred to a boat which stopped in Detroit. Word was spread to Norris that the boat with his order was about to land in Detroit, so he had to quickly secure seven, two and four horse teams and urge them through the heavy mud on the road towards Detroit. There was no vessel in Detroit when he arrived, so he rented a row boat, rowed down the river, found the boat with his goods on it, and finally rowed back to Detroit to await its arrival. From there, the wagons were loaded and 31 days from the time that they left New York, his shelves were packed with products for sale.

Building and equipping a store and a new home in one year was not enough for Mark. He was appointed postmaster and eventually served two terms under President Andrew Jackson. He knew that the wealth of this new community was to be connected to the water power that it offered, and soon set about harnessing and selling that water power of the river by building substantial dams to replace the primitive ones that resembled beaver dams. Mark rented out the water power from at least one of the dams, and he also imported carding machinery to open a woolen mill to process wool and create cloth. During the next twenty years, he would become a partner in a number of mills on the Huron River including the woolen mill, a saw mill, and several flour mills.

Mark was also concerned about the moral climate of his new community. In 1829, he became one of the founding members of the Temperance Society – devoted to eliminating alcohol in this rough pioneer community where drunken men and woman were often involved in brawls and lawless activities.

He became a partner in two distinct businesses designed to make Ypsilanti a center of trade and which would allow raw and trade goods to be brought into the town and also shipped out of it. In 1831, he purchased stock and became director of an ambitious railroad line called The Detroit – St. Joseph Railroad Company which was to run between Detroit and Chicago. However, after making little advancement, this company was bought out by the Michigan Central Railroad six years later.

In 1833, Mark became involved in another imaginative but failed venture with other citizens in Ypsilanti. He was a shareholder in a large boat designed to navigate the Huron

River and bring goods into and out of town. Unfortunately the “Enterprise” as the boat was optimistically named, was soon wrecked and Mark’s investment lost.

As testimony to his financial success with his store and mills, around 1833 Mark built a large brick home for Rocenna and his children. The family left their frame structure and moved south on River Street to a beautiful, large home on the Huron River, the same river which had contributed to Mark’s wealth as a mill builder and owner. Rocenna was able to again enjoy living on a river as she had as a young girl in New York. She quickly made the house into a home, planted gardens, furnished rooms, and began entertaining both local citizens and travelers. The Norris home was referred to as “The Minister’s Hotel” because of the number of clergymen and their families who stayed with them. Her beloved mother moved from New York and lived with the family in their large home.

Norris continued to purchase and sell land, especially on the east side of Ypsilanti. Between 1834 and 1852, sometimes working with partners, he incorporated a great amount of land on the east side as additions to the city including what is now the area bounded by River, Prospect, Forest and Cross Streets.

Believing that the growing town needed a source of capital to invest in new business ventures, Mark joined with other leading citizens of Ypsilanti to charter the Bank of Ypsilanti in 1836. The bank operated for three years before going bankrupt. Norris has been honored by both friends and historians as paying off all debts even though the amount of money owed far outweighed his income.

By 1838, Mark Norris owned and operated the flour mill in Depot Town and helped influence the building of a train station in the area of Cross and River Street, thus founding Depot Town. He built a large brick structure, The Grand Western hotel and tavern, on a triangular piece of ground just west of the Michigan Central train station. The magnificent building opened in 1839 with stores on the ground floor and the hotel above.

During this time, Mark’s wife Rocenna continued to earn a place in the heart of the community as well. She made sure that her two children were well educated by sending them both out of town to complete their education. (More will be written about Elvira and Lyman in another episode of “The River Street Saga.”). When the state of Michigan was investigating a town in which to build a college for teachers, Rocenna and Mark donated \$1,000 to the fund collected by the generous people of Ypsilanti to ensure that the college would be built in Ypsilanti. When the college opened, their daughter, Elvira, was among the first students.

In 1838, Rocenna helped form a library association in town, as her father had done in New York. She was a founding member and president of the Ladies’ Home Association,

which served the needs of the poor and the unfortunate in Ypsilanti, providing to their needs with dignity and generosity.

In 1839, Norris was one of the founding members of a secret society called The Vigilance Committee. Its purpose was to try and curb illegal and dangerous activity in the community. The group met on a regular basis in secret locations to try to stop crime and protect the citizens of Ypsilanti.

With all of his enterprise and interests, Mark Norris was noted for being an indulgent father and a caring husband. One example, in 1838, occurred when his wife and daughter, Elvira returned from a visit back East, they found a new carriage waiting for them at the

depot, and when they arrived home were surprised by a beautiful piano forte in their parlor. He loved what he called his "Old House by the River."

Many of his letters to family, friends, and business associates are tenderly saved and available at both the Bentley Library of the University of Michigan and the Ypsilanti Historical Society archives. In one, he offers advice to a somewhat homesick daughter who has married and moved to New York. In the letter dated November 10, 1841, he writes "Now, Elvira... you (now) live in Alexander, don't you (?) Well, now, you must not say one word against the town or its inhabitants. Speak well of the town and its inhabitants. If all would try to find some good quality in every-

one they meet or see and would, if it became necessary to speak of them at all, speak of those good qualities... how much better it would be."

Both Mark and his wife were involved in the Presbyterian Church in Ypsilanti, which by 1856 was in need of a new facility. Mark Norris took the lead, as a trustee, and not only served on the board to oversee the construction of a beautiful new structure, but the Norris family contributed \$1,000, which was a sizable amount of money at the time.

Like her husband, Roccena was interested in the world around her. In the sermon given at her funeral, she was described by Reverend Tenall as "...blessed with a wonderful memory.

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The June 2018 reception at the YHS museum with Suzanne Benton and Roxane Canfield, front row- furthest two women on the right.

This connected with her wide range of general reading made her one of the most entertaining of friends. She seemed to know something of almost everything – perhaps no subject could be started in conversation concerning which she could not furnish some scrap of literature, and she was always learning, always reading...Her desire for knowledge and her interest in educated persons was unabated to the end of life.” Roccena was an advocate of woman’s rights and a noted reader and writer of letters. Indeed, many of her letters and papers are in the Norris Family Collection at The Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, including correspondence with early feminists such as Caroline Kirkland and Electa Stewart.

About the year 1860, The Michigan Central Railroad needed the land that the Norris hotel was built upon to expand. Mark used his skills and imagination to deal with this challenge. He

arranged for the bricks from the hotel to be moved across the street from the northwest corner of Cross and River Street to the northeast corner. There he constructed the magnificent and imposing Norris Block which opened in 1861. It was bought by O.E. Thompson in 1869, who painted his family name across it and has since been known as “The Thompson Block.” Few remember now that for the first eight years, this imposing three-story structure was called “The Norris Block.”

Mark Norris had time to prepare for his death at the age of 62 in 1862. Because of his father’s failing health, Lyman moved back to Ypsilanti in about 1854 and along with Mark’s son-in-law, Benjamin Follett, took over the business enterprises with which his energetic father was involved. Mark Norris died at his beautiful home on River Street, a block from Depot Town, in an area that he not only lived in, but

founded. He left behind a grieving family with two married children and nine grandchildren. Eight of his fourteen siblings were still alive when he died. His wife, Roccena, continued to live in her beautiful home, very actively involved with her family, church, and community to the very end of her life. She was surrounded by her entire family when she died at the age of 79 in 1876. Both now rest together in eternal peace on River Street at Highland Cemetery, sharing the same view that they first had upon arriving in Ypsilanti as a young couple.

(Janice Anschuetz has lived in the historic east side of Ypsilanti for over 50 years. She is the author of the chapter “How the Historic East Side Came Back to Life” in the new book celebrating Ypsilanti’s bicentennial titled “Ypsilanti Histories – A Look Back at the Past 50 Years.” She is an Ypsilanti historian and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)

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Archives – 734 217-8236

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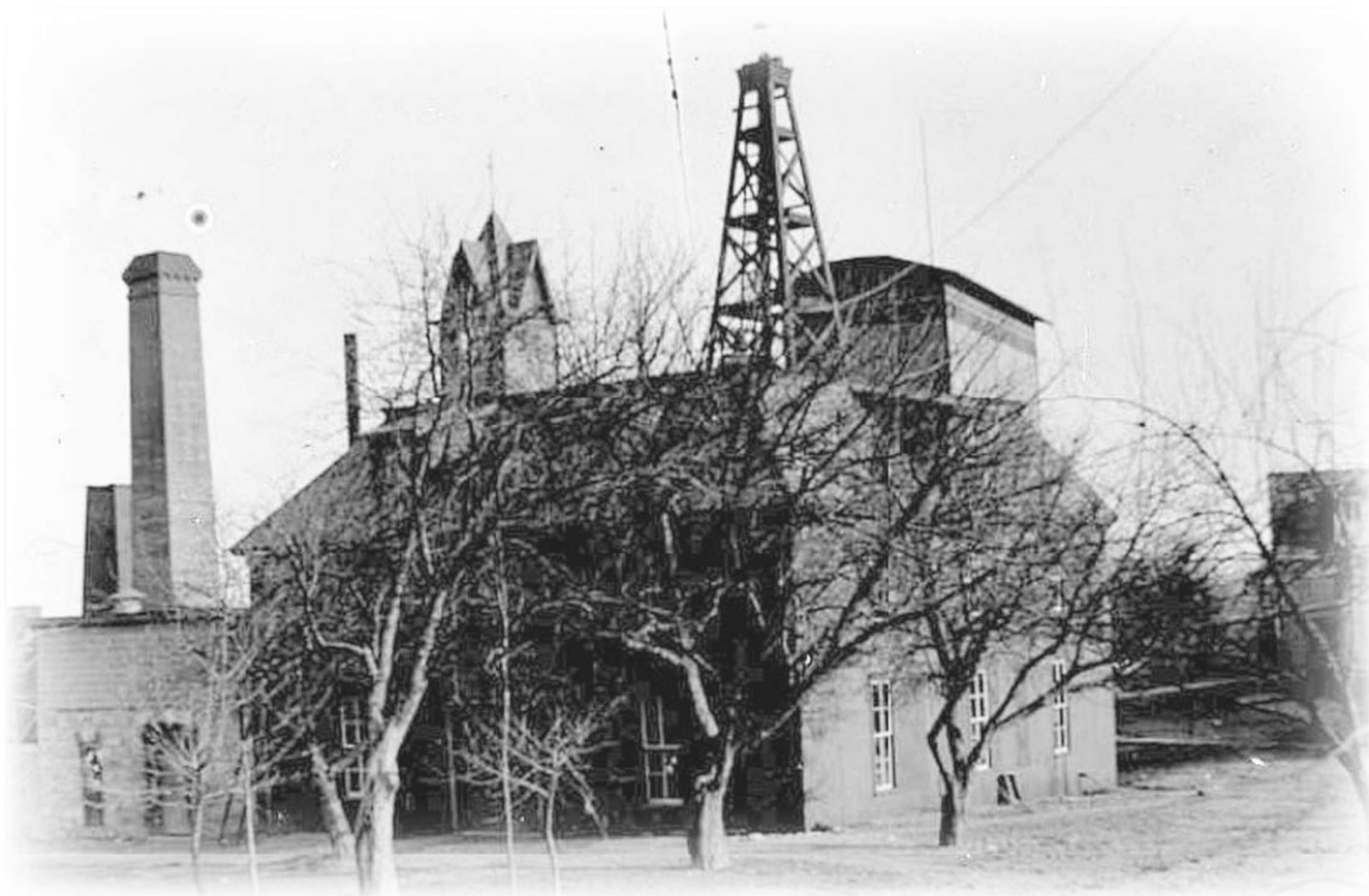
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11 to 4 Sunday

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Of Salt Springs and the Origins of Michigan State Normal College

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ

If you mention that you are from Ypsilanti, Michigan to a group of people, several will likely want to tell you about living in our city while attending Eastern Michigan University. The history of the city and university has gone hand-in-hand since 1850. In Reverend Harvey Colburn's book "The Story of Ypsilanti" first published in 1923 for the Ypsilanti Centennial, and now republished and available for purchase at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum, there is detailed information about how the citizens of Ypsilanti joined together to advertise and promote their village as the perfect place for the state to authorize and build a college for teachers.

Let me briefly summarize what I was able to find out about this. In 1849 and 1850, the Michigan Board of Education was concerned that just about anyone could become a teacher if they were male, could use a switch for unruly children, and were willing to put up with up to 50 students in a cramped and poorly-built building for seven hours each day. Because the salary was so low, a teacher also had to be satisfied with

boarding in a drafty or stifling hot attic with a straw mattress. The Board of Education decided to follow the lead of the state of Massachusetts which had made teaching into a profession and established three "normal colleges" where teachers could be taught how to teach, what to teach, and when to teach in a child's development.

After deliberating, the state of Michigan passed a directive establishing a "normal school" which would be directed by the state Board of Education. But then the question was, how would this be funded? A strange answer to this question was that the state would sell 25 sections of "salt spring land". This means that the land with springs where salt could be evaporated and sold for a profit would fund the soon-to-be-built normal school. Ypsilanti had its own salt spring located on property currently owned by Eastern Michigan University, which Tubal Cain Owen used to create a factory that produced bounties of evaporated salt extract that supposedly cured just about anything. Ypsilanti's neighboring city

named Saline was likely named because of a salt spring located there. The money raised from the sale of state-owned salt springs would form an endowment to the normal school, but it would be up to the community where it was built to raise money to erect buildings and equipment.

A great rivalry soon occurred among various towns and villages who wished the normal school to be built in their midst. As you can imagine, the benefits to the community would be an improved educational system for their own children, job opportunities in providing boarding houses for the students, various stores such as book stores, mercantile, and grocery stores required to provide food, increased church attendance and so forth. This prospect was exciting to some of the leading citizens of Ypsilanti who joined together, raised money, sought a possible building site, and made a presentation to the Michigan State Board of Education. The eager citizens of Ypsilanti pledged

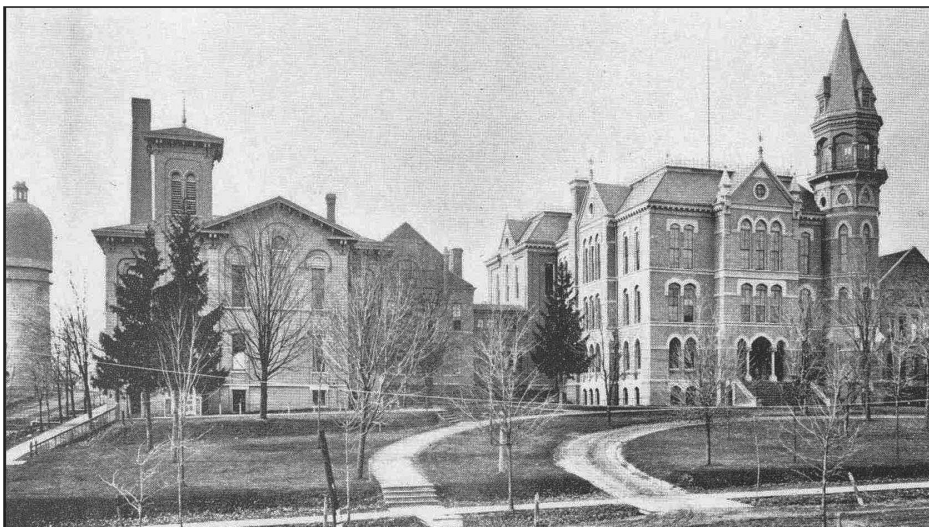


Bottle of Ypsilanti Mineral Water Salts.

\$13,500 and also offered several building sites. The “icing on the cake” was a promise to pay the salary of the principal of this model school an amount of not more than \$700 a year for the first five years.

The villages of Jackson, Marshall, Niles and even Gull Prairie - wherever that is - also made proposals. The board made their choice not only on the up-front money provided, but accessibility, location and health concerns for pupils and staff. As we know, the site the state ultimately selected was

Ypsilanti, and soon after being chosen the first building was started. It was a rectangular shaped building, 55 by 100 feet, three stories high built on a rise of land, costing \$15,200. The citizens of the small village of Ypsilanti supplied \$12,000. The State Board of Education provided \$8,000 of the \$10,000 which they had accumulated by selling salt spring land. This covered the rest of the building cost, leaving money for equipment and furniture such as



The first buildings of Michigan State Normal College.



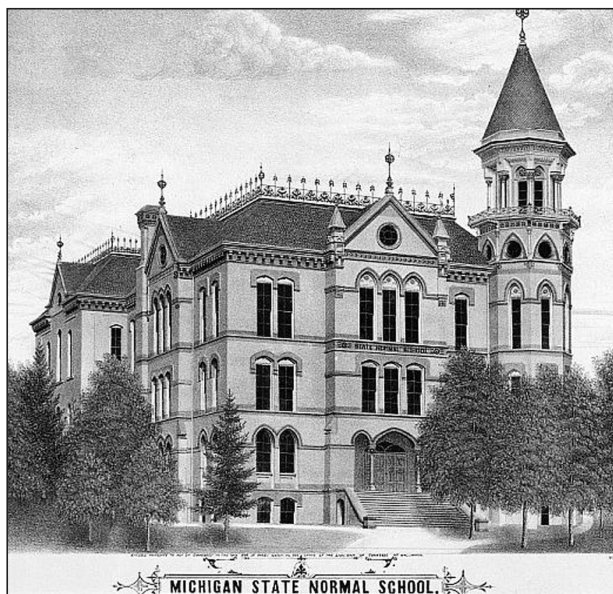
Your Neighborhood Grocery Store

**Locally-made bread,
fresh produce,
whole organic foods,
Deli-made organic
sandwiches & salads
to go, local beer &
wine, dairy and meat,
and hundreds of
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Michigan State Normal College Administrative Building.



Michigan State Normal College Library.

desks, black boards, and so forth.

The first floor of the college resembled a one-room school house in that it consisted of a large classroom with space for nearly 90 desks, a small reception room, a library and cloak room. Physics and chemistry were taught on this floor. The second story was dominated by a huge classroom with desks for 208 students and a few small recitation rooms. The third floor was similar, with several small rooms adjacent to a large one.

The State Board of Education and the proud citizens of Ypsilanti celebrated the opening of this educational institution for teachers on October 5, 1892. Immediately after, the first six week long “teachers’ institute” was held with 250 students in attendance. Much has been written about the history of the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University. The fact that this novel idea of a school dedicated to the training of teachers is a tribute to the generosity and foresight of citizens of the small village of Ypsilanti in 1848. For one hundred seventy-three years, thousands of teachers have lived and learned in Ypsilanti, making our city with the unusual name known throughout the world.

While doing research I came across information about MSNC at the Ypsilanti Historical Society archives and thought that I would share it with you.

Michigan State Normal College Firsts

- It was the first teacher education institute established west of the Alleghenies in the United States.
- It was the first tax supported college in Michigan open to both men and women.
- It was the first institute of higher learning in Michigan to receive tax payer support.
- In 1888 it was the first college in the western United States to train teachers in physical education.
- In 1890 it was the first college in Michigan to have a geography department.
- In 1897 it was the first teacher training institute in the Midwest to become a four-year college.
- In 1901 it was the first collegiate institution in Michigan to offer classes in industrial arts.
- In 1915 it became the first state teachers training institute in the entire United States to offer training for the teachers of handicapped students.
- It was the first teachers college in the entire United States to have a social center building – McKenny Hall in 1931.
- In 1940 it became the first teacher training institution to organize a curriculum for library services.

(Janice Anschuetz has lived in the historic east side of Ypsilanti for over 50 years. She is the author of the chapter “How the Historic East Side Came Back to Life” in the new book celebrating Ypsilanti’s bicentennial titled “Ypsilanti Histories – A Look Back at the Past 50 Years.” She is an Ypsilanti historian and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)

Museum Advisory Board Report

BY EVAN MILAN, CHAIR

Bicentennial festivities will soon be underway as the City of Ypsilanti celebrates its 200th anniversary; The Ypsilanti Historical Museum will play a central role in this momentous occasion. Visitors, local and from afar, will have the opportunity to view many of the artifacts that make Ypsilanti noteworthy, as well as mementos of celebrations past. Through these pieces, Ypsilantians of the present can become connected with the Ypsilantians of the past.

On Saturday, June 24th the Ypsilanti Historical Museum took part in one of the summer's first Bicentennial events. Through the efforts of the Ypsilanti Rotary Club, the three major museums of the city, the Michigan Firehouse Museum, the Automotive Heritage Museum, and the Ypsilanti Historical Museum joined together, offering admittance all for one ticket priced at \$10. In addition to a rich immersion of Ypsilanti history, ticket holders were offered the chance to partake in an ice cream social held on the lawn of the Towner House at 301 N. Huron Street.

July 4th will bring new artifacts to the Ypsilanti Historical Museum that have lain just below the Water Tower, at the junction of Cross St and Washtenaw Ave, for 50 years. At the 1973 Sesquicentennial, celebrating the 150th anniversary of Ypsilanti's founding, a time capsule was buried.

Thirty minutes after the end of the 2023 4th of July parade, the time capsule will be unearthed to reveal those items deemed most pertinent to the story of Ypsilanti, for future admirers. These 50-year-old pieces will be transferred to the Ypsilanti Historical Museum, once exhumed, for display for the remainder of the bicentennial year.

Additionally, Bicentennial memorabilia has been made for this year's celebration and will be on sale in the Archives of the Museum. Sweatshirts and t-shirts, as well as prints, and books will all be available during operating hours.

As 2023 brings a great many changes to our museum, it also brings some changes in our Board of Advisors. At our June Advisory Board meeting, Kathleen Campbell tendered her resignation as a member of the board. Kathleen has served the Ypsilanti Historical Museum in excess of 30 years; she has played a major role in developing many of the displays that continue to educate visitors to the Dow home. Kathleen is a noted lace crafter and has demonstrated her skills and imparted her knowledge on the lawn of the Historical Museum during the past Heritage Festivals. We wish Kathleen all the best, though her absence from our board will be keenly felt.

Right: The time capsule that was placed in front of the Demetrius Ypsilanti statue during the sesquicentennial in 1973, was exhumed with the assistance of the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA).

Below: Marker indicating where the sesquicentennial time capsule was buried.





Leland Aftercare Sanatorium on Geddes Road. Note the large windows and wide spaces on each floor to allow the patients to enjoy sunshine and fresh air during their recovery.

Leland Aftercare Sanatorium

BY JAMES MANN

From 1927 and into the 1980's there stood at 10,000 Geddes Road an impressive building. This building was two stories high and about one hundred feet long with large windows and open land around it. This was the Leland Aftercare Sanatorium, where those recovering from Tuberculosis were sent to regain their strength and prepare for their reentry into daily living on their own.

Tuberculosis is a highly contagious disease that infects the lungs and was a major cause of death in Washtenaw County during the 19th Century and the early years of the 20th Century. For many who were diagnosed with Tuberculosis it meant death. Not until the early years of the 20th Century were treatments found to be effective against the disease.

Even then those infected had to spend time in sanatoriums, in part to separate them from those they might infect, and to provide the care needed over time. Sanatoriums were seen by many as the place where those infected went to die. As treatments improved, places were needed where those who had recovered could go to regain their strength and develop the skills for their return to family life. This is why the Leland Aftercare Sanatorium was founded in 1927 by the Detroit Tu-

berculosis Society.

"The farm covers several acres and is attended by patients who work under the supervision of the people in charge of the institution," reported The Detroit Free Press, of Wednesday, July 13, 1927. "Thus, in healthful surroundings and with an abundance of sunshine and fresh air, the patients are able to win their way back to their normal health and are able to build a fund of reserve strength to withstand the attacks that, in cases of those who go directly from 'cure' sanitariums to normal life, are usually fatal in seven years."

The report noted the farm was about four miles from Ypsilanti and had facilities for taking care of 75 people. At the time of the report there were 25 people under care at the farm. The patients were housed in the main building, which included spaces where the patients could rest in sunshine under the large windows. There was on the grounds a dormitory for nurses near the main building, as well as a residence for doctors.

The Detroit Tuberculosis Society offered the sanatorium for sale to the state of Michigan in 1947, for the price of



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Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Tel: (734) 483-5811
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\$300,000. The offer included approximately 260 acres of farmland. The state did not accept the offer and the Detroit Tuberculosis Society continued to operate the sanatorium until 1954, when, after treating a total of 2,386 tuberculosis patients, the sanatorium was closed and the building put up for sale.

"The building is being vacated because the state has added beds to state and county hospitals and the need for private institutions such as Leland has decreased," reported The Ypsilanti Press in 1954. The sanatorium, the report noted, had a capacity of 110 beds and at one time had as many as 130 patients.

"Also, to be sold," continued the report, "will be two farms operated by Leland, one including 190 acres, surrounding the hospital, and another

at Geddes and Harris Roads, which includes 80 acres. Other buildings include the doctors' and nurses' homes which made the Sanatorium self sufficient."

The site was purchased by the Garden City Osteopathic Hospital in February of 1955, and the building reopened in July of that year, now named Ridgewood Osteopathic Hospital. Here, from July of 1955 through March of 1968, a total of 5,864 babies were born. A decline in the birth rate caused the hospital to change to a community hospital after 1968, with personal care for its patients. By 1971 the trend toward larger hospitals resulted in a decline in admissions at the hospital. Ridgewood Hospital was closed in August of 1971.

The building was used for storage after it was closed. Here were stored

used hospital equipment which was considered "too good to throw away but not good enough to use."

Then on Sunday, November 25, 1984, a fire broke out in the building resulting in a nine alarm blaze. "Firefighters worked throughout the night trucking in water to pour on the wooden structure. When the road became icy from the runoff water in the 30-degree weather, the Washtenaw County Road Commission was called in to salt the road," reported The Ypsilanti Press on Monday, November 26, 1984.

The fire-damaged ruins were soon cleared away, and all that was left was an empty space.

(James Mann is a local historian, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular contributor to Gleanings.)

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History of the Helen Avenue Feral Cat Colony

BY TED BADGEROW



Sitting in our front yard on Helen Avenue in Pittsfield Township, I'm confronted by a small suburban jungle. Across the street are no houses, just power lines strung from very tall poles. There is a considerable undergrowth of small trees and bushes, goldenrod, grapevines, ragweed and milkweed growing under the poles, and it provides good shelter for the raccoons, skunks, possums, rabbits, feral cats and other small animals who reside there. Lots of butterflies, including monarchs, flutter among the milkweed that flourishes in summertime. Our backyard is fenced in and we have a couple of young groundhogs burrowed under the woodpile. Kathy and I enjoy the company of lots of squirrels and chipmunks and over 50 species of birds that frequent our feeders and provide endless fascination for the salivating cat colony...

You'd think that as owner, groundskeeper and benevolent overlord of the estate I'd be the king of the jungle, but no! That title belongs to Romeo alone. More of him later...

Helen Avenue is only three blocks long, with so little traffic that some of the cats enjoy sunning themselves in the middle of the road, disturbed only by dog walkers, bicyclists, parents with strollers, and kids walking to or from the school bus. In the first two years we noticed a couple of litters of kittens, and the feline population began to increase. We put dry cat food and water on the front porch for them.

Then one evening in December of 2005 we had to put our family dog Roxy down, and our wonderful veterinarian Jim Smith came to help see her off. As he was leaving I showed him our front yard igloo and pointed to a couple of young cats we had been feeding dry food, water and eggnog. "These might be your next patients," I said, and picked up one we were calling Noggins (short for Eggnog). "Maybe

not," Jim replied. "Her ear is docked." He explained to me about the Humane Society's TNR program (Trap, Neuter, and Release). So I brought the other cat, Nuts, (short for Nutmeg) to the Humane Society in our little cat carrier to be "fixed."

It's hard to express the appreciation and admiration I have for the entire staff on Cherry Hill Road. In the early 1970s I worked a couple of summers for the Kent County Animal Shelter, where I was employed as a "Dog Enumerator" with the dog census program. My job was to drive my Volkswagen bug ("Calamity") throughout rural townships and knock on every door, find out if the people had any dogs, and to issue citations for unlicensed dogs. (That was 50 years ago; imagine someone knocking on your door checking dog licenses today? I don't think so!). When I pulled into a farmhouse driveway, all the male dogs would sniff the Calamity and urinate on her left rear tire. I guess it was a traveling scent bag... I love dogs and they're generally friendly to me. I was never bitten, but a couple of farmers with several unlicensed dogs would have liked to take a bite out of me.

After the procedure, I asked to borrow a live trap (which I'm still using after 20 years) to bring more cats in for the TNR, and signed a form committing me to be manager of our feral cat colony and provide them food and shelter. When it gets cold in the fall I build a Cat Castle in the garage, using an inverted hammock frame to give them a split level home for the winter. I've brought at least 18 cats in to be neutered and receive their first shots. The small fee charged certainly does not nearly cover all the expert work done by the excellent vets at the Humane Society.

Our job is to keep the population down and the cats safe. From a maximum population of 16 felines, we now have

about eight regular cats and a few occasional visitors. A few are quite friendly, and like to wander between my legs as I play guitar on the front porch. Some of the cats we've captured have found new homes with friends looking for feline companionship, others remain at large in the neighborhood, and a number of kittens have been placed in homes through the Humane Society adoption program.

To trap a cat, think like a cat. First, decide which animal you would like to capture. Check out their daily whereabouts and eating habits. Leave the trap open and feed your intended catch in it for a few days. The Humane Society TNR program accepts feral cats and kittens on Monday through Thursday, so bait and set your trap at about 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. (tuna fish really works!). Have a large towel or blanket ready to cover the animal trap immediately after capture. Cover your back seat with newspapers and keep watch from an unseen location. I usually call the Humane Society TNR to let them know I intend to bring a kitty in when they open at 9:00. Twice I have been lucky enough to capture two small kittens at the same time! My current target is a black mama cat who has had a couple of litters. Fortunately, a cat that has been trapped once rarely wanders in again – except for our one-eyed cat Big Phil, a very hairy guy whom we dubbed Phyllis Diller until we discovered his true sex.

Romeo is the undisputed king of the colony, a very large hairy fellow with a harem of female companions and many offspring. He was my #1 target for a while and is the only one to escape the trap after entering and springing it. A couple of years ago I captured all of Romeo except for the last inch of his tail, and he exploded like a thunderbolt and escaped in less than a second, just as I was patting myself on the back. Since he got the better of me I've pretty much given up on ever catching him...

One morning at 7:15 a.m. I was sitting



flossing my teeth before going in to work at the Ypsi Alehouse, where I brew beer. I was wearing only briefs when a sudden very loud caterwauling erupted on the porch. I threw open the door, and my large friend Li'l Bertha was in midair being tossed between two very large dogs. I began shouting "Giiiiit! GIIIIIT!!!" at the top of my lungs, grabbed a leaf rake on the porch and began beating them off. Li'l Bertha, bleeding and terrified, escaped under the cedar shrubs in front of the house as I broke the rake on one of the dogs. They pursued her under the shrubbery as I continued to yell and poke them hard with the handle of the rake. Just then a small truck pulled up and a very apologetic young man whistled them into the back and explained that they had escaped from his yard. Li'l Bertha was pretty well mauled, so Kathy and I took her to the

Easthaven Animal Hospital, where we discovered she was really Big Bert. He was too badly injured to go back to the wild, but one of the workers at the Animal Hospital adopted him and gave Big Bert a home.

We've has some real characters. Most of the feral cats belong to one of three families – The Scamperdoodles, the Underfoodes, or the Longhair Clan. Among them are Snickerdoodle, Dip-sy Doodle, Daisy Doodle, Ava, Zsa Zsa, Snowflake the black cat, Goldilocks, Socks, Lucy, Ethel, Chester, and Big Phil. There's also Peeping Tom, who stands up and peers in the front door at feeding time. He catches chipmunks and plays with them, letting them go and recapturing them – perhaps to tenderize them with adrenaline before consumption. Chester suffered a broken leg, but it was amputated by the great vets at HVHS and he now gets along fine on the remaining three.

And our hearts were broken when Nuts, who purred as she sat on my lap, finally went to the feline Valhalla.

The Humane Society of Huron Valley does much needed work for both the human and animal communities. If you are able, please consider donating to the TNR or any of their excellent programs.

("Trapper Ted" Badgerow is the co-owner of the Ypsilanti Ale House and has won many state and national awards for his beer brewing expertise.)

Like the Ypsilanti Historical Society loves preserving the past.

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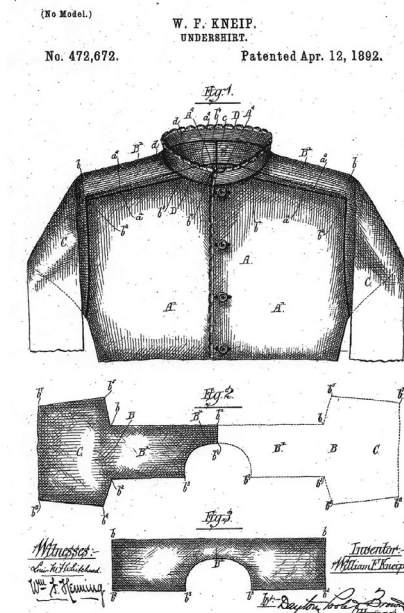


Ypsilanti Patents

BY GEORGE RIDENOUR

(Note: This article is reprinted from a 2011 issue of Gleanings.)

While searching through forty-nine (49) pages of patents attributed to “inventors” from Ypsilanti I came across patents which were, shall we say “unique.” Let me present you a brief cross section.



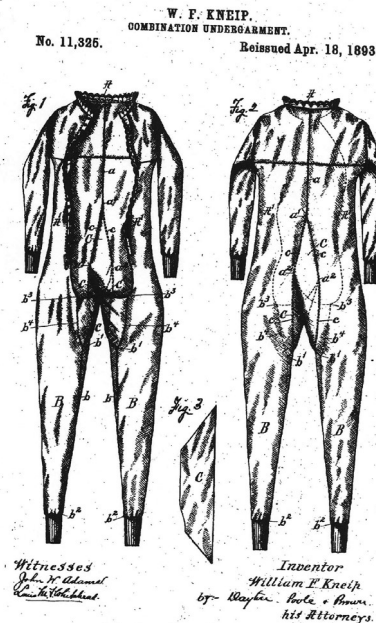
“Undershirt” Patent in 1892.

William F. Kneip: April 12, 1892 - Undershirt:

“This invention relates to improvements in undergarments which are made from elastic or ribbed knit or woven fabric. Undergarments of this class have commonly been made of front and rear body-pieces suitably joined at their side and top margins to form the body portion of the garment.....”

William F. Kneip: April 18, 1893 - Combination Undergarment:

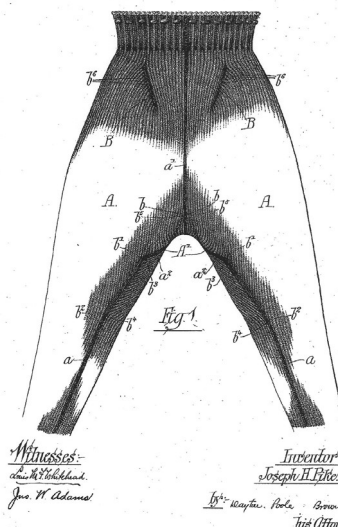
“This invention relates to an improved knit under-garment of that kind known as a “combination garment” or one in which a shirt and drawers are combined in one article, the invention being more particularly applicable to such garments as made for ladies...In



“Combination Garment” patented in 1893.

a combination garment made in accordance with my invention, the garment is formed mainly by pieces of knitted fabric extending continuously from the top to the bottom of the garment through the body part and legs.....”

(No Model.) J. H. PIKE. EQUESTRIENNE TIGHTS. No. 504,402. Patented Sept. 5, 1893.



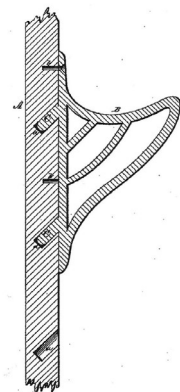
“Equestrienne Tights” patented in 1893.

Joseph H. Pike: September 5, 1893 - Equestrienne Tights:

“This invention relates to equestri-

enne tights, knit drawers, or similar garments for ladies, wear of that kind which is made of flexible knit or ribbed fabric, such as is produced by means of single thread knitting machines, such as those known as the “lamb” machines; the invention relating more especially to a construction by which the necessary fullness is provided in the rear portion or set of the garment. The invention is applicable both to drawers alone and to combination garments or those consisting of a shirt and drawers made in one piece.”

T. J. SHEEARS. Stilts. No. 144,799. Patented Nov. 18, 1873.



“Improvement in Stilts” patented in 1873.

Witnesses: John A. Stiles, C. Alexander. Inventor: Thomas J. Sheears, by J. H. Alexander, Attorney.

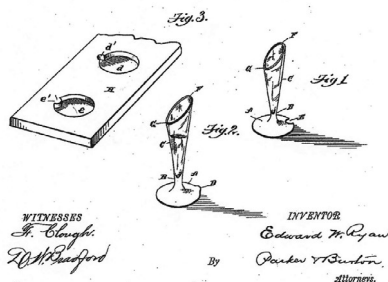
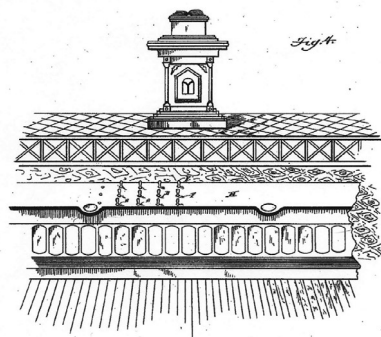
Thomas J. Sheears: November 18, 1873 - Improvement in Stilts:

“The nature of my invention consists in the construction and arrangement of a stilt, as will be hereinafter more fully set forth. (NOTE: The “improvement” was the foot rest of the stilt).

Edward W. Ryan: November 5, 1895 - Individual Communion Service:

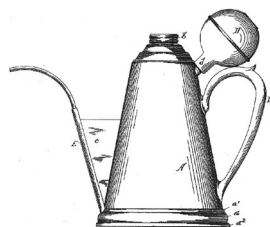
Rev. Dr. Ryan was a pastor of the M.E. Church for five (5) years in the 1890s and continued for six years longer as

(No Model.)
E. W. RYAN.
 INDIVIDUAL COMMUNION SERVICE.
 No. 549,278. Patented Nov. 5, 1895.



DESIGN.
 No. 30,935.
E. W. RYAN.
 COMMUNION CUP FILLER.
 Patented June 9, 1899.

"Individual Communion Service" patented in 1895.



"Communion Cup Filler" patented in 1899.

WITNESSES:
Edw. W. Ryan
John W. Ryan
 INVENTOR:
E. W. RYAN
 BY *Edw. W. Ryan*
John W. Ryan
 ATTORNEY.

district superintendent. He built the large house at the bend in Washtenaw Avenue. He had lived previously at 607 Ellis and 212 Ellis in Ypsilanti. He was married to Charlotte Hance and they had 5 children.)

This invention relates to an individual communion-service for use in churches at the celebration of communion-service, and has for its object an improved form of cup adapted to hold the sacramental wine; a table on which the cup rests during parts of the ceremony and which is provided with seats for the individual cups so

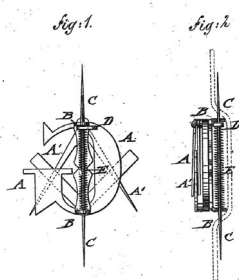
formed as to register with the cup and compel the attendant to place the cups in the proper position for convenient use."

Edward W. Ryan: June 6, 1899 - Communion Cup Filler:

The communion cup filler provided for the filling of individual communion cups.

James McCoy: October 17, 1876 -

J. MCCOY.
 MASONIC-BADGES.
 No. 189,318. Patented Oct. 17, 1876.



"Masonic Badges" patented in 1876.

WITNESSES:
James McCoy
John W. Ryan
 INVENTOR:
J. MCCOY
 BY *Edw. W. Ryan*
John W. Ryan
 ATTORNEY.

Improvements in Masonic Badges October 17, 1876:

"The Invention is a new and improved Masonic Badge. My invention relates to an improved Mason Badge that may be readily applied to the coat and adjusted to indicate the special degree of the wearer, or when applied to lodge-jewels, the degree of which the lodge is working."

Ypsilanti patents show the diversity of inventions, thoughts, and even up to the time of this writing, the intellect of citizens of Ypsilanti "goes where others fear to go?"

(George Ridenour was very active in the Ypsilanti Historical Society and provided assistance to individuals searching for the history of people, places or things associated with Ypsilanti. George passed away in 2015.)

Welcome to the Neighborhood!

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frontdesk@kimberlyricedds.com

Archives Intern Report

BY CONNOR ASHLEY

Connor Ashley is the graduate student intern for the Rudisill-Fletcher-White Archives and is in both the Master of Arts in History and Master of Science in Historic Preservation programs at Eastern Michigan University. Connor also works as a graduate assistant in the Eastern Michigan University Archives. He has lived in Ypsilanti since 2021 and has served in his role as the graduate intern at our archives since early January.

Greetings from the Ypsilanti Historical Society's Rudisill-Fletcher-White Archives! My name is Connor Ashley and it has been my distinct honor to serve in the role of graduate student archival intern for YHS for just over six months. In that time, I have learned an immense amount of new information about Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Charter Township, Washtenaw County, and Eastern Michigan University. Thanks to longtime residents and volunteers like James Mann, Russ Kenyon, and YHS President Bill Nickels, I have truly had a master class in Ypsilanti history and institutional knowledge that could easily serve as a three-credit college-level course at EMU. Also, thanks to volunteers and other mentors, I have been able to work my way into an efficient system for accepting new donations and processing previous ones. It has been very rewarding to be able to apply the ar-

chival knowledge I have gained through my work with the Eastern Michigan University Archives to my work here at the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

As a graduate student in the Museum Practice and Heritage Interpretation track of the EMU Historic Preservation program, being able to marry archival practice and museum-related collections management skills has benefited me greatly. One of the most rewarding experiences so far was being able to serve as host for and student in a graduate-level EMU Historic Preservation program course on museum curatorship and interpretation. The class, taught by Professor Nancy Bryk, utilized the entirety of the YHS Museum to locate interesting objects to curate, and then were able to utilize the YHS Archives as a staging area and a resource of information to learn more about their objects and about the local Ypsilantians to which they were connected. This culminated in Austin, the graduate student museum intern, my other classmates, and myself being able to provide a curated interpretation and historical significance presentation of our objects to members of the YHS Board of Trustees. I know my classmates and I are much more familiar with utilizing both this archive and other archives as well. Look forward to upcoming copies of the Gleanings where we will be showcasing one of the YHS objects that were curated

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The homepage of the Ypsilanti Historical Society Photo Archives on the University of Michigan Library website.

Archives Intern Report

continued from page 28

by our curatorship class in each issue!

Another point of immense pride for the Rudisill-Fletcher-White Archives has been the hard work of our volunteers working on the digital Ypsilanti Historical Society Photo Archives located on the University of Michigan Library website. Thanks to these volunteers, including Tom Quigley and Russ Kenyon in particular, our digital photo archives now has over 16,000 Ypsilanti-related photographs available to the public for research and download. This is an immense point of pride for us as an institution, as we receive many hits on our page every day from places all the way from Canada to Greece. So thank you to these hardworking volunteers who make this possible!

In closing I just want to reiterate my appreciation for being able to serve in this position and for being made steward of such an important amount of Ypsilanti history. In this position I have grown from a resident of Ypsilanti, to one smitten with it. I look forward to seeing you in-person or speaking with you through our email yhs.archives@gmail.com or our phone number at (734) 217-8236!

Do you want to learn more about Ypsilanti History and share it with others ?

The Ypsilanti Historical Society is
looking for Docents to assist with tours of the museum
and volunteers to help in the Archives

If you're interested or want more information
contact Austin Martin at the museum office
or Connor Ashley in the Archives

734.482.4990 museum office

yhs.museum@gmail.com

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(734) 217-8236 archives office

yhs.archives@gmail.com



Towner House Update

Last fall the main water line was installed as part of the North Huron Street infrastructure upgrade. In December an energy efficient HVAC system, hot water heater and gas line were installed. The rough plumbing was finished in June and the electrician is scheduled for July.

The house will be open as a work in progress for this year's Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Home Tour, on Sunday August 20 from noon to 5 p.m. The tour will be featuring homes and churches on Huron Street. The First Presbyterian Church will be offering pipe organ performances from noon to 2 and there will be a VIP offering at the Newton of Ypsilanti from 3 to 6 p.m. that will include refreshments on the patio from chef Allison Anastasio, live music and local art work will be on display.

Proceeds from the tour will go to the continuing rehabilitation of the Towner House.

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